



MONTANA TEACHER LEADERS IN THE ARTS

MAC teams up with OPI on new initiative

The Montana Arts Council and the Office of Public Instruction are teaming up to offer Montana Teacher Leaders in the Arts, a professional development initiative for K-12 educators across the state. Through this exciting new program, MAC and OPI seek to develop teacher leaders who can support other teachers statewide in integrating the arts into their classrooms.

According to the most recent data gathered by the Montana Arts Council, less than half of public schools in the state clearly articulate the arts in their school improvement plans. In Montana elementary schools, 86% of schools offer music instruction, while only 61% offer arts instruction, less than 5% offer any kind of theatre or dance, and 11% of schools offer no high-quality arts experiences at all (goo.gl/rPU2ZR).

In addition, over half of Montana's schools have fewer than 100 students, and with a small student body, few of them can afford to bring in a full- or even part-time arts specialist. The arts are then left to be taught by elementary classroom teachers who, while endorsed to teach the arts in their curriculum, often lack the skill or confidence to offer high-quality experiences to their students.

After years of struggle with cutbacks in budget and programs nationally, there is renewed interest in the impact the arts can have on learning. And with current research that shows 72% of business leaders say creativity is the number one skill they are seeking when hiring (goo.gl/vNxBNp), and a wealth of research to support the myriad benefits of arts education, MAC and OPI see an opportunity to give arts education a much-needed boost in Montana's public schools by training a cohort of educators to serve as coaches, mentors and advocates in their schools and local communities for an arts-integrated approach to teaching and learning.

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Cyndy Andrus appointed to NASAA

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is pleased to announce the election of Cyndy Andrus, chairman of the Montana Arts Council, to its board of directors. As part of a rigorous national nomination process, state arts agencies elected a slate of outstanding leaders at the NASAA Assembly 2014 conference in New Orleans. Each will serve a three-year term.

Andrus has more than 25 years of experience in the tourism industry, with an emphasis on marketing, strategic planning and geotourism. She is the principal of Andrus Consulting, which focuses on tourism development, marketing and communication in rural and urban Montana communities.

Andrus is currently the chair of the Montana Arts Council and a member of the Montana Heritage Commission. She serves on the governor's Tourism Advisory Council (past chair), which oversees the distribution of the state lodging tax and advises the governor on tourism issues.



Cyndy Andrus

Andrus is a current Bozeman city commissioner and a member of the Montana Ambassadors. Previously, she served as director of the Bozeman Convention and Visitor Bureau.

"NASAA will find Cyndy's involvement of enormous benefit, and Montana will continue to reap the rewards in playing a vital role in the national arts conversation," said Arni Fishbaugh, executive director of the Montana

Arts Council and former president of the NASAA board. "We couldn't be more pleased that she has a seat at this distinguished table!"

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies is the membership organization that unites, represents and serves the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies. Founded in 1968, NASAA represents their individual and collective interests, empowers their work through knowledge, and advances the arts as an essential public benefit.

To learn more about NASAA and state arts agencies, visit www.nasaa-arts.org.

NEA Performing Arts Director to keynote MPAC Showcase and Conference

Douglas Sonntag, director of Dance for the National Endowment for the Arts and interim director of Performing Arts (Dance, Music, Opera, Theater and Musical Theater), presents the keynote speech at the annual Montana Performing Arts Consortium (MPAC) artist showcase and booking conference, Jan. 23-25 at the Mansfield Performing Arts Center in Great Falls.

Sonntag gives the keynote talk, "National Perspectives on the Frontier," on Friday. He also offers a grants workshop the following morning and will be available for consultations.

Prior to his current duties, Sonntag served as director of the Office of National Initiatives where he supervised work on several signature Arts Endowment programs, including Shakespeare in American Communities, Save



Douglas Sonntag

America's Treasures, American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius, and the NEA Arts Journalism Institute.

His presentations are free and open to the public; however, free tickets are required and may be picked up at the Mansfield Performing Arts Center box office beginning Friday, Jan. 9.

Also free and open to the public is Saturday's Artist Showcase. Seventeen professional performing artists from the U.S. and Canada each share 12-minute samples of their work during segments that begin at 9 a.m., 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. in the Mansfield Center Auditorium.

The showcases offer an opportunity to sample a wide variety of media and entertainment from top-quality Montana, regional, and international artists. For more information, visit www.mtperformingarts.org or call the MPAC office in Bozeman, 406-585-9551.

Bill Ohrmann: A legacy of discovery, compassion and generosity

By Cory Walsh
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Bill Ohrmann produced such an enormous and respected body of artwork that admirers and friends thought he might be with them forever.

The Drummond painter, sculptor, carver and former rancher passed away at age 95 on Nov. 19, surrounded by family.

His son, John Ohrmann, said his father had been suffering from heart ailments recently, but his mind remained sharp until the end.

Just two weeks ago, they held an open house at his gallery and museum two miles south of Drummond, and

Ohrmann came out to greet and visit with the 100-some people in attendance.

"He really felt honored that people thought his work was worth coming to see," John Ohrmann said.

Others were less humble about Ohrmann's accomplishments than the artist himself.

"Montana has lost one of its true native sons," said Stephen Glueckert, curator at the Missoula Art Museum.

He said Ohrmann's art was marked by a sense of discovery, compassion, generosity and enjoyment.

Its themes included a love of the natural world, biting criticism of man's treatment of animals and each other, and an understated Montana sense of humor.



Bill Ohrmann (Photo by Tom Bauer/Missoulian)

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